

Tuesday, 30 September, 2008

SHADY ITINERANT TRADERS TARGETING HILLS AND REGIONS

Dodgy itinerant traders have been reported driving around the Adelaide Hills and regional areas offering to sell electrical and mechanical equipment from the back of their vehicles.

SA Police have interviewed a number of sellers - all overseas visitors to Australia - and it is suspected that the sellers are part of a larger group of up to 30 itinerant traders who are travelling across Australia selling goods as they go.

Consumer Affairs Minister Gail Gago is warning the public to be aware of questionable traders and not purchase their goods.

“Shady traders seem to do the rounds in South Australia every few months or so selling equipment ranging from electrical goods to cameras to offering to do building work,” Ms Gago said.

“The latest reports are of traders driving around the Adelaide Hills and regional areas offering to sell generators, high pressure cleaners and other equipment.

“The quality of the goods being sold by these traders is often questionable and the sellers are likely to be breaching fair trading laws.

“There is every chance that consumers may be misled about the quality or value of the products, and the products could be unsafe.”

Traders who travel from place to place selling goods or services over \$50 are required to comply with the door-to-door sales provisions of the Fair Trading Act 1987, which includes providing the consumer with a ten-day cooling off period. No money or goods should be exchanged until the cooling off period has expired.

“Itinerant traders often ignore their legal responsibilities because they are more concerned about making a quick profit than having any regard for consumer interests,” Ms Gago said.

“Itinerant traders quickly move on and are difficult to contact if purchasers wish to make a refund or warranty claim.”

The State Government warned consumers in May this year about shady generator deals, but at this stage there is no evidence to suggest that the same people are behind this latest operation.

“My advice to consumers is simple - do not buy goods from the back of a van or a truck,” Ms Gago said. “It is just too risky. The products may be inferior, the sales spiel may include misleading information, and the traders will likely disappear without a trace once they have your money.”

Consumers who have information about the activities or whereabouts of these itinerant traders are urged to contact Consumer Affairs on 8204 9777, or 131 882 for country callers, or to contact BankSA Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.